

F-19

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL SERVICES  
Township of Union Public Schools  
M-E-M-O-R-A-N-D-U-M

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TO: Dr. Scott Taylor

C: Gerald Benaquista, Yolanda Koon, Kim Conti, Bernadette Watson, Diane Cappiello

FROM: Joseph Seugling

RE: Board Agenda

DATE: 2021-10-26

Approve the implementation of Rutgers Paraprofessional Behavioral Support Coaching Project in district schools in accordance with the information provided to each Board member. This will be at no cost to the district.



Graduate School of Applied  
and Professional Psychology

Graduate School of Applied Professional Psychology  
Paraprofessional Behavior Support Coaching Project  
Gordon Road Office Building, Ste. C  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
41 Gordon Road, Ste. C  
Piscataway, NJ 08854

lreddy@gsapp.rutgers.edu  
(848)445-3849

## **Rutgers Paraprofessional Behavior Support Coaching Project**

The purpose of this notification is to invite your school district to participate in a research study, the Rutgers Paraprofessional Behavior Support Coaching Project, and provide you with information about the project.

### **Who is conducting this research project?**

This study is being conducted by Drs. Linda Reddy and Todd Glover, Professors in the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers University. Drs. Reddy and Glover each possess over 20 years of experience conducting research related to education, behavioral supports for students, and data-driven school improvement.

### **What is the purpose of the research and why is it being conducted?**

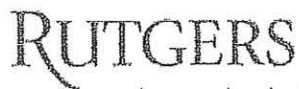
Paraprofessionals are among the most prevalent providers of classroom-based behavioral interventions for students, however, they often have very little training or job-embedded support in behavior management. This gap in paraprofessional training is alarming, given potential academic and behavior risks associated with students with externalizing behavior disorders. These students are at high risk for academic failure, school dropout, parent/family relationship issues, driving accidents, peer problems, teenage pregnancy, drug use, suicide, unemployment, divorce, and negative health outcomes. To provide sufficient behavioral supports for students, paraprofessionals and others who deliver in-classroom services are in dire need of additional on-the-job training.

This research project is being conducted to determine the effectiveness of coaching designed to help elementary school paraprofessional classroom aides provide behavior support strategies to K-5 students with or at risk for behavioral disorders. Coaches will support paraprofessional classroom aides and homeroom teachers in implementing a toolkit of strategies to meet students' needs. This study is the first of its kind and will enhance our knowledge of effective professional development interventions for paraprofessional classroom aides.

### **Who are the participants involved? How will they be selected?**

Across 80 school sites, approximately 240 paraprofessionals, 240 teachers, and 720 students with or at risk for a behavior disorder will participate in the study. Students diagnosed with autism, other pervasive developmental disability disorders, and/or severe mental retardation will not be eligible to participate. Similarly, paraprofessionals and teachers who only work with these populations of students will not be eligible to participate.

School district leaders and principals will help identify elementary schools (grades K-5) that contain at least 3 paraprofessionals who work with 3 or more students with or at risk for externalizing behavior disorders. Recruitment meetings at these schools will then be conducted by Drs. Reddy and Glover. Once on board, participating schools will then be randomly assigned to either (a) receive immediate coaching support with data collection during this school year or (b) participate in data collection this school year and receive coaching support the following year.



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### **What information will be collected?**

Data collected will encompass behavioral intervention practices utilized by paraprofessionals, students' behavioral and academic outcomes, and potential mediating and moderating variables throughout multiple time points during the study. Data will be collected via online logging of strategies, rating scales, behavioral and classroom observations, coding of permanent products, and achievement measures.

To help ensure accurate links between the multiple data sources, we will collect some identifying information on participants including their name, school association, classroom assignment, age, gender, and ethnicity. To protect the identity of participants, all identifying information will be replaced with unique numeric identifiers in the database.

### **Who will have access to the information that is collected?**

All study information and data collected will be kept confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location. The data gathered in this study are confidential with respect to all participants' personal identities unless participants specify otherwise. The research team and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see these data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group de-identified results will be stated (no individual teachers). All study data will be kept for five years (2022).

### **What are potential risks and discomfort associated with this project?**

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study. Given the nature of the study mirrors routine educational practices, we anticipate there is minimal risk for participating paraprofessional classroom aides, the corresponding classroom teachers, and their respective students.

If participants report feeling uncomfortable in any way during the study they can contact Dr. Linda A. Reddy at 848-445-3949 or Dr. Todd Glover at 848-445-5416. If participants would like to stop participating in the research project, they may do so at any time.

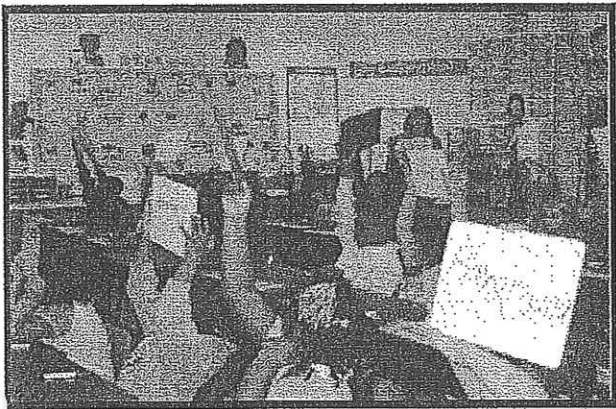
### **What are potential benefits of this study?**

Participating paraprofessionals, teachers, and students may benefit from (a) receiving instructional coaching to enhance their professional competencies in using evidence-based behavioral interventions (b) increased knowledge of evidence-based behavioral interventions, (c) positive improvements in students' academic and behavior outcomes, (d) positive improvements in their relationships with students, and (e) positive improvements in the paraprofessional-teacher relationship. However, participants may receive no direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Participating paraprofessionals and teachers will also receive a financial reward of \$100.00 for completion of the study and all assessments.

## Elementary School Paraprofessional Aides

- The *Rutgers Behavior Support Coaching Project* is offering a professional development (8 sessions, approx. 30 minutes per meeting) designed to help teachers and paraprofessional aides use evidence-based behavior interventions and supports for student at risk for or with externalizing behavior issues.



### The Rutgers Behavior Support Coaching Project hopes to:

- Improve Overall Quality of Education
- Support Teachers and Paraprofessionals
- Improve Paraprofessionals Positive Classroom Management Skills
- Improve Student Behavior and Learning

### **FREE Professional Development Training and Coaching Support Opportunities!!**

During times that are most convenient for K-5 teachers and paraprofessional aides, a behavior support coach will visit your classroom. Collaboratively, teachers, paraprofessional aides and coaches will build on what works best for your classroom.

**Teachers and Paraprofessional Aides will receive Professional Development hours and a stipend for participation!**

To learn more, please call: **848-445-3845**  
Linda A. Reddy, Ph.D. at: [LReddy@GSAPP.rutgers.edu](mailto:LReddy@GSAPP.rutgers.edu)  
Todd Glover, Ph.D. at: [Todd.Glover@Rutgers.edu](mailto:Todd.Glover@Rutgers.edu)

## Project Summary/Abstract

**Title:** Efficacy of Paraprofessional Behavior Support Coaching for Elementary School Students with Externalizing Behavior Disorders

**Topic:** *NCSEER Professional Development for Teachers and Other Instructional Personnel*,  
**Goal 3 (Efficacy)**

Students with or at risk for externalizing behavior disorders (e.g., Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder [ADHD], oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder) utilize almost 25% of all special education services in schools. When these students fail to receive adequate behavioral support, the consequences are often significant, leading to poor school performance, school drop-out, juvenile delinquency, and social problems. Although paraprofessionals are among the most prevalent providers of classroom-based behavioral interventions for students, they often have very little training or job-embedded support in behavior management. This gap in paraprofessional training is alarming, given potential academic and behavior risks associated with externalizing behavior disorders. The *purpose of the proposed project* is to utilize a randomized control trial to evaluate the impact of a coaching approach (behavior support coaching for paraprofessionals; BSC-P) based on extant coaching research in supporting paraprofessionals in the implementation of data-driven intervention supports that lead to positive outcomes for students. This Goal 3 efficacy study is *innovative*, in that it will be the first to conduct a rigorous investigation of a research-based coaching approach for enhancing paraprofessionals' implementation of student behavioral interventions. The study will include participants from K-5 classrooms in high-poverty Northern and North-Central New Jersey schools. Two-hundred forty K-5 paraprofessionals (approximately three per school) from 80 schools, their corresponding classroom teachers, and approximately three students with or at risk for externalizing behavior disorders from each paraprofessional's classroom (a total of 720 students) will participate. A 3-cohort randomized controlled trial will be conducted, with schools randomly assigned in equal numbers to BSC-P or a waitlist, business-as-usual control condition that will receive the coaching intervention in a follow-up year. Data will be collected from schools in the waitlist control condition to determine the extent to which participants were exposed to BSC-P comparable support and intervention delivery. Multiple measures will be used to evaluate the impact of BSC-P on paraprofessionals' behavioral intervention practices, including an online intervention log and coding of permanent products. Students' behavioral and academic outcomes will be evaluated using the Behavior Assessment System for Children-3, Social Skills Improvement System, Woodcock Johnson IV Tests of Achievement, and direct observations via the Behavioral Observation System in Schools. Coaching fidelity, paraprofessional-teacher relationship, and coaching acceptability will be measured as potential moderating variables. A linear mixed modeling framework utilizing a multilevel growth model that takes into account the nested structure of data will be used to investigate the impact of BSC-P on paraprofessionals' intervention practices and student outcomes. Multilevel structural equation modeling will be used to explore the influence of mediating and moderating variables.

## INTERVENTIONAL RESEARCH PROTOCOL TEMPLATE (HRP-503a)

### INSTRUCTIONS

This template should be used by biomedical and social-behavioral researchers conducting research which subjects are assigned to receive one or more interventions so that the researchers can evaluate their effects. (e.g. clinical trials, CBT, Behavioral Modification studies, or randomized outcome studies)

Sections in red may not be applicable to your research; you may replace the instructional text with "N/A".

As you are writing the protocol, remove all instructions in blue italics so that they are not contained in the final version of your protocol.

### STUDY INFORMATION

**Title of Project:** *Efficacy of Rutgers Paraprofessional Behavior Support Coaching*

**Principal Investigator:**

*Linda A. Reddy, Ph.D*

*Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology*

*School System Improvement Project*

*Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey*

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*Piscataway, NJ 08854*

*Telephone: 848-445-3845*

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### PROTOCOL VERSION AND DATE:

Protocol Number: (If Available)

PI Name:

Protocol Title:

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intervention group schools will collect data during baseline, coaching, and post-intervention. Although control group schools do not receive the BSC-P intervention during the intervention year, data collection will similarly occur at 3 time points: during baseline, mid-way through the year, and at the end of the year.

Data collected will encompass behavioral intervention practices utilized by paraprofessionals, students' behavioral and academic outcomes, and potential mediating and moderating variables throughout multiple time points during the study. Data will be collected via online logging, self-report, direct behavioral and classroom observations, coding of permanent products, school records, and achievement tests.

All research and data collection procedures are confidential. Identifying information about paraprofessional classroom aides, teachers, and students will be collected. The identifying information collected will include the name, demographic characteristics, classroom assignment, and school building assignment of all participants. To ensure confidential protection of the collected data, all participants identifying information will be coded and assigned a random number. Access to the confidential data and linkage will be restricted to Rutgers University research staff.

A. The current study will be conducted in public school districts throughout New Jersey over the course of four years from September 2017 to June 2021.

From June to July 2017, PIs Reddy and Glover will contact school district boards of education, superintendents' offices, and directors of special services to introduce the project and gauge interest in participation. If school districts are interested in participating, PIs Reddy and Glover will schedule in-person meetings with district leaders to review the study procedures and determine eligibility criteria. For the participating school districts, PIs Reddy and Glover will then provide district offices with a copy of the Rutgers University IRB protocol, attachments, consent forms, and notice of IRB approval once received, as well as complete any required school-district-specific IRB forms.

During August – September 2017, PIs Reddy and Glover will work with school districts to recruit participating schools, paraprofessionals, teachers, and plan implementation of the BSC-P intervention. This will include presentations to paraprofessional classroom aides, teachers, and school principals about the study. Rutgers University Research Staff along with PIs Reddy and Glover will provide informed consent procedures for paraprofessionals and teachers. Initial demographic and characteristics information for paraprofessional classroom aides and teachers will occur at this time.

During August-September 2017, PIs Reddy and Glover, in collaboration with participating school districts and schools, will create an information sheet about the study, which will be distributed to parents at the start of the school year. The information sheet will explain the nature of the study and the passive consent process that will be used for students (see section 4.6). Due to the nature of the study reflecting routine instructional coaching practices in school districts, as well as the routine work of paraprofessional classroom aides in schools, a passive consent process for students will be used. Parents/guardians of students who do not want their children to be included will need to contact PIs Reddy and Glover, who will then coordinate with the participating schools.

Schools will then be randomized to the BSC-P condition or the wait-list control condition. Schools in the intervention group will receive an initial 1-day professional development workshop introducing effective research-based behavioral assessments.

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During September – October 2017, study behavioral screening procedures for students and their classrooms will occur at each of participating schools:

- (1) The BSC-P intervention group school teachers will nominate 5 students exhibiting behavioral issues and complete the *Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BESS-3)*, a behavioral screener for these 5 students.
- (2) Independent trained observers on the Rutgers Research team will then conduct and code two classroom observations using the *Behavioral Observation System in Schools (BOSS)*.
- (3) Based on the data from the BESS-3 and BOSS, 3 students will be selected for behavioral intervention supports with the classroom paraprofessional.

Following study screening procedures, baseline assessments for each of the three students and the classroom will be completed.

- (1) *Disruptive, externalizing, and social emotional functioning* will be assessed by the *Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC-3)* and the *Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS)*. Teachers will complete the BASC-3 and SSIS.
- (2) Academic performance will be assessed using the Reading and Math subtests of the *Woodcock Johnson IV* and the *SSIS-Academic Competence Scale*.
  - a. Teachers will complete the *SSIS-Academic Competence Scale*.
  - b. For each of the 3 students Rutgers University research staff will administer the *Reading and Math subtests of the Woodcock Johnson IV*.
- (3) Two classroom observations using the *Classroom Assessment Strategies System (CAS)* will also be conducted by trained independent observers on the Rutgers Research team to measure teachers' usage of evidence-based classroom behavioral management strategies.
- (4) Paraprofessional classroom aides will also complete the *Paraprofessional Teacher Relationship Scale (PTRS)*.

From November 2017 to July 2018, the BSC-P intervention will then occur at the schools randomly selected for the intervention group. The BSC-P intervention will be provided by Masters of Doctoral level practitioners and advanced doctoral students who have experience working with students with behavioral and academic difficulties and who have participated in rigorous training in school-based coaching on previous projects. These individuals will be considered the BSC-P coaches for this study. The BSC-P intervention includes approximately 8 primary coaching sessions and follow-up sessions every six weeks spread out across the course of one school-year. The coaching phases will develop paraprofessionals' competencies in screening students for academic or behavioral difficulties, identifying students' behavioral needs, matching students' needs to research-based interventions, and monitoring students' response to intervention.

Waitlist control schools will not receive the intervention at this time. They will conduct business as usual. Paraprofessional classroom aides in waitlist control schools will be asked to log their routine activities and business as usual using an online logging system.

During the coaching process, the BSC-P intervention group paraprofessional classroom aides will log their usage of behavioral interventions and quality of implementation using an online logging system. BSC-P coaches will also use the same online system to document each coaching meeting's content, duration, and outcomes. BSC-P coaches will conduct ongoing classroom observations during the coaching process to observe the paraprofessional using the behavioral interventions with students.

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employees of their school district, and (b) paraprofessionals and other in-classroom service providers do not work exclusively with children with autism, pervasive developmental disability disorders, or severe mental retardation.

**1.6 Study Variables**

**A. Independent Variables, Interventions, or Predictor Variables**

The current study is examining the efficacy of a BSC-P intervention compared to business as usual professional development procedures in school districts. The IV being manipulated in the current study is participants' assignment to the intervention group which receives BSC-P intervention immediately or the waitlist control group, which does not receive BSC-P coaching until the following year. In short, we are comparing the BSC-P intervention group outcomes to the waitlist control condition business as usual outcomes.

**BSC-P Intervention**

The BSC-P intervention includes approximately 8 primary coaching sessions and follow-up sessions every six weeks spread out across the course of one school-year. The coaching phases will develop paraprofessionals' competencies in screening students for academic or behavioral difficulties, identifying students' behavioral needs, matching students' needs to research-based interventions, and monitoring students' response to intervention. Additionally, paraprofessionals will be provided with a toolkit of research-based interventions for working with students with externalizing behavior disorders. The initial first 3 sessions will include both paraprofessional classroom aides and his/her corresponding classroom teacher. The latter 5 sessions will be conducted individually with each paraprofessional only. The BSC-P intervention includes five phases:

- (1) Needs identification (Phase I). During the first coaching session, the coach will support each paraprofessional in working with the classroom teacher to review the behavioral data (screening data) for approximately three students identified with or at risk for behavior disorders. The coach, paraprofessional, and teacher will discuss behavioral targets for each student. The paraprofessionals will also learn how to use a highly reliable approach with an online Student Behavior Data Collection Worksheet to collect and record additional baseline data on antecedents, behaviors (and their severity rated from 1-5), and consequences pertaining to each student's behavior.

- (2) Needs analysis (Phase II). One week following the session for Phase I, the coach will again meet with both the paraprofessional and his/her corresponding classroom teacher. During this session, the coach will review the additional data collected by the paraprofessional and support the paraprofessional and classroom teacher in verifying the function of specific behaviors and a list of appropriate strategies from the Behavior Intervention Toolkit for addressing each student's specific behavioral needs. The coach will then orient the paraprofessional and teacher to the correct category of intervention from the behavioral intervention toolkit provided based on the function of the student's behavior. The coach will then invite the paraprofessional and teacher to take the following week to review the interventions from that category and select the ones that they would like to implement with each student.

- (3) Plan development (Phase III). One week following the session for Phase II, the coach will again meet with both the paraprofessional and his/her corresponding classroom teacher. During this session, the coach will provide support in verifying which interventions to use with

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students based on the functions of their behaviors. The coach will then (a) review steps of a standardized plan associated with each intervention and (b) the implementation procedures. The paraprofessional will then be afforded an opportunity to practice the strategy and to receive feedback from the coach.

- (4) Intervention implementation (Phase IV). During one month following Phase III, the paraprofessional will implement the selected interventions with the students. Paraprofessionals will use an online log daily to track their adherence to intervention steps and will use the online Student Behavior Data Collection Worksheet to monitor student behavior progress. During this time, the coach will conduct three observation/coaching sessions with the paraprofessional. Observations will occur during times when the paraprofessional is providing intervention to students. They will be followed immediately by a debriefing and feedback session. Additional phone and email support will be offered as needed and logged.

- (5) Evaluation of progress (Phase V). Immediately following Phase IV, the coach will meet with both the paraprofessional and his/her corresponding classroom teacher. The coach will review the intervention log and online Student Behavior Data Collection Worksheet from the paraprofessional and discuss graphed progress of the paraprofessional's implementation and student behaviors with both the paraprofessional and teacher. The coach will provide support in determining from the graphed data whether the student is progressing in response to intervention, whether the intervention should continue, and/or whether changes to the intervention plan are needed based on a lack of implementation or the inappropriateness of the selected intervention.

- (6) If all students in a classroom are progressing, then the Phase V session will be completed every six weeks for the remainder of the school year to monitor ongoing progress. When students are not progressing in response to intervention, then Phase IV and Phase V will be completed until all students continue to progress in the classroom.

**Waitlist Control - Business As Usual**

Schools assigned to the waitlist control condition will continue to engage in their routine practices for assisting paraprofessionals and teachers in implementing behavioral support practices for students with or at risk for emotional behavior disorders. In previous work (Broer, Doyle, & Giangreco, 2005; Giangreco, Suter, & Hurlley, 2013), paraprofessionals and classroom teachers report having limited job embedded support (e.g., coaching) in behavioral management approaches. Data will be collected from schools in the waitlist control condition determine the extent to which participants were exposed to BSC-P comparable support and intervention delivery as part of business as usual procedures in schools.

Following the year-long delay, waitlist control participants will receive the BSC-P coaching the following school year.

**B. Dependent Variables or Outcome Measures**

The DV's expected to change encompass behavioral intervention practices, student behavioral and academic outcomes, and potential mediating and moderating variables throughout multiple time points during the study. These data will be collected via online logging, self-report, direct behavioral and classroom observations, coding of permanent products, school records, and achievement tests. Please see the table below:

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**1.9 Interviews, Focus Groups, or Surveys**

N/A. The current study is using a randomized trial procedure without interview, focus groups, and surveys. All study measures have been specified in the previous section 1.8.

**A. Administration**

N/A.

**(Timing and Frequency**

N/A.

▪ **Location**

N/A.

▪ **Procedures for Audio and Visual Recording**

N/A.

**B. Study Instruments**

N/A.

**1.10 Timetable/Schedule of Events**

Please see the previous research procedures described in 1.3.A Research Design & Method above for a detailed timeline. In brief a sample timeline of implementation is below for Year 1. The implementation and data collection procedures will be replicated in Years 2 and 3 with new study cohorts. Year 4 will be devoted to data entry and cleaning, data analysis, and reporting and dissemination activities. Also the attached timetable for all years of the project:

**Year 1, Cohort 1, SY 2017-2018**

June to July 2017 – IRB Approval, School district recruitment procedures for Cohort 1; Additional recruitment for Cohort 2 and 3

August to September 2017 – School building and participant recruitment; informed consent procedures; Notification to parents/guardians; initial 1 day PD workshop; randomization into assigned condition

September to October 2017 - study behavioral screening procedures for students and classrooms

September to October 2017 - baseline assessments completed for each of the three students and the classroom

November 2017 to January 2018 - BSC-P intervention will begin for intervention group; first three coaching sessions with paraprofessional and teacher occur

January to February 2018 - baseline assessments will be repeated a second time to measure coaching outcomes.

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January to June 2018 – remaining 5 coaching sessions and follow up occur; baseline assessments are repeated a 3<sup>rd</sup> time following completion of the 8<sup>th</sup> coaching session

June to August 2018 – data entry and quality control checks will occur throughout summer

June to August 2018 – additional recruitment will take place as needed

**2.0 Project Management**

**2.1 Research Staff and Qualifications**

All project investigators have experience conducting research related to education and psychology and evaluating data. The PIs, Drs. Linda Reddy and Todd Glover, each possess over 20 years of experience conducting research in school settings with school teams. Both Drs. Reddy and Glover are faculty members at the Rutgers University Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology. Mr. Christopher Dudek, the Project Manager/Study Coordinator possesses eight years of experience conducting research in school settings with school teams. He is currently employed at the Rutgers University Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology as a research analyst and assistant director. The BSC-P intervention will be provided by Master's level practitioners and advanced doctoral students who have experience working with students with behavioral and academic difficulties and who have participated in rigorous training in school-based coaching on previous projects.

**2.2 Resources Available**

**Facilities**

Data collection and coaching will primarily occur at participating school districts local school buildings and classrooms. It is anticipated that classrooms or meeting rooms at participating schools/districts will be used to conduct the BSC-P intervention coaching process.

For the online logging system, the logging software is owned by Rutgers University. The research team is located at The School System Improvement Project offices on Livingston Campus: 41 Gordon Road, Suite C, Piscataway NJ 08854

**Medical or Psychological Resources**

N/A

**Research Staff Training**

PIs Reddy and Glover will supervise key research team personnel. Training will be provided to research team personnel over the summer months of 2017. All investigators are CITI certified by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program). PIs Reddy and Glover will conduct regular project management meetings to ensure research integrity.

**2.3 Research Sites**

Oversight of the current study will be carried out by Rutgers University, which is where the research team, survey software, and Institutional Review Board are located.

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For students who will be the focus of BSC-P intervention with paraprofessionals, a multi-step procedure is used. As mentioned, the first step of identifying potential students with or at-risk for externalizing behavior disorders is a teacher nomination. At the beginning of the school year, teachers will be asked to nominate at least 5 students exhibiting behavioral difficulties in their classroom who do not have autism or another pervasive developmental disability. In addition to the nomination, teachers will complete the paraprofessional classroom aide. For these 5 students, teachers will complete the Behavioral and Emotional Screening System – 3 (BESS-3).

Based on the identified 5 students, Rutgers University research staff will then conduct two direct behavioral observations using the Behavioral Observation System in Schools -3 (BOSS-3). Data from the direct behavioral observations with the BOSS-3 will be used to narrow down the pool to 3 students. The 3 students will then be confirmed during the first three coaching meetings between the coach, teacher, and paraprofessional classroom aide.

All procedures above are subject to (a) parent/guardian approval through the passive consent process and (b) school district leader discretion and decisions on appropriate fit for the study. At any time, school district leaders may determine that a paraprofessional, teacher, and associated students are not eligible to participate. Similarly, parents/guardians may inform school district leaders and PIs Reddy and Glover that they do not want their children participating.

▪ **Inclusion Criteria**

Paraprofessional classroom aides eligible to participate must be (a) actively employed in their school district in grades K-5, (b) do not work exclusively with do not work exclusively with children diagnosed with autism, other pervasive developmental disability disorders, and/or severe mental retardation, and (c) work with more than 1 child. Paraprofessionals of all genders, race, ethnicity, and age are welcome to participate in the study. There is no upper bound limit to the number of paraprofessionals who can participate in the survey.

▪ **Exclusion Criteria**

Paraprofessional classroom aides not eligible to participate are (a) not actively employed at the school district, (b) do not work in grades K-5, (c) work exclusively with children with autism, pervasive developmental disability disorders, or severe mental retardation, and (d) are assigned to only work with 1 child.

**E. Recruitment Materials**

Initial recruitment materials that will be sent to schools include (a) brief email describing the project, (c) a project abstract, and (e) project flyer. All three documents are attached.

Pis Reddy and Glover will bring these materials to initial in-person meetings with school district leaders and directors of special services, as well as the later recruitment meetings with principals, teachers, and paraprofessional classroom aides.

**F. Lead Site Recruitment Methods**

N/A

**4.3 Subject Randomization**

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Across three-cohort years, 80 schools will be randomly assigned to the BSC-P (n=40) or waitlist control condition (n=40). Random assignment will take place with approximately the same number of schools within each of three cohorts. Because paraprofessionals work in multiple classrooms within a school, randomization within schools would be subject to potential drift/contamination of the intervention across classrooms. Schools will be selected at random for assignment to either condition.

School district leaders will be aware of which schools and paraprofessional classroom aides are assigned to the BSC-P intervention and which are assigned to the wait-list control condition.

**4.4 Secondary Subjects**

There are no secondary subjects in this study.

**4.5 Number of Subjects**

**A. Total Number of Subjects**

Approximately 240 paraprofessionals and classroom teachers who work with students with or at risk for externalizing behavior disorders from 80 schools will be included. Approximately 720 students with or at risk for externalizing behavior disorders will be the focus of BSC-P intervention with paraprofessionals.

A three-cohort approach will be used to implement the study over the course of 4 years. Cohort 1 will include approximately 20 schools, 60 paraprofessionals, and 180 students. Cohorts 2 and 3 will each include approximately 30 schools, 90 paraprofessionals, and 270 students.

**B. Total Number of Subjects If Multicenter Study**

N/A

**C. Require Number of Subjects to Complete Research**

The minimum target goal across the study is 240 paraprofessionals and teachers, who are each associated with 3 students (a total of 720 students).

Due to the screening procedures for both paraprofessional classroom aides and students, over-recruiting procedures will be utilized. It is anticipated that closer to 300 paraprofessionals and teachers will be invited to participate. Approximately 1200 students will be nominated by teachers and then screened for eligibility by Rutgers University research staff.

**D. Feasibility Of Recruiting**

To make recruitment feasible, Pis Reddy and Glover will begin recruiting in the early summer months of 2017. Recruitment will be targeted to large school districts which contain 10 or more elementary schools. This will maximize the number of paraprofessional, teacher, and student combinations available. For example, Newark Public Schools contains over 30 elementary schools and over 200 paraprofessionals potentially eligible to participate.

To make recruitment and study deployment feasible, we are utilizing 3-cohorts. By design, the first cohort will include a smaller number of schools, which will be scaled up in the second and third cohort (later years of the project).

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Additionally, at the start of the study, a signed ground rules agreement form indicating participation or non-participation in the study cannot be used for employment related decisions will be required of school district and school building leaders.

**3. Subject Understanding**

Pis Reddy and Glover, along with the Project Manager, will provide extra time during the informed-consent discussion to answer questions about the study. A written copy of the consent form will be provided to all participants. Additionally, the Rutgers University research staff coaches will be able to provide ongoing information about the study during the coaching process.

**4.7 Special Consent/Populations**

**A. Minors-Subjects Who Are Not Yet Adults**  

- Criteria for Consent of Minors

All eligible students in this study fall within grades K-5, which typically occupies the age range of 5 years to 13 years old. Therefore all students are considered Minors-Subjects Who Are Not Yet Adults.

- Wards of the State

Procedures in the current study will follow guidelines for Wards of the State in accordance with NJ law. In general, the research being conducted in public schools in which the majority of children involved as subjects are not wards. In the event that this definition is met, the legally appointed representative/advocate from the state will act as the student's parent/guardian for all matters related to the current study.

**1. Research in NJ Involving Minors**

Procedures in the current study will follow guidelines for Legally Authorized Representatives and Guardians in accordance with NJ law. In general, the research being conducted in public schools in which the majority of children involved as subjects are not represented by Legally Authorized Representatives or Guardians. In the event that this definition is met, the legally Authorized Representatives or Guardian will act as the student's parent/guardian for all matters related to the current study.

**2. Research Outside of NJ Involving Minors**

N/A

- Parental Permission

As mentioned, for eligible students, we are using a passive consent process instead.

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Prior to the start of the study, Pis Reddy and Glover will work with partner school districts to create a study information sheet which will then be distributed by school leaders to parents/guardians of all students in the school district. The information sheet will explain the purpose of the study, its procedures, and the passive consent process. Parents/guardians of students who do not want their children to be included will need to contact Pis Reddy and Glover, who will then coordinate with the participating schools to remove students and paraprofessionals from the study.

We are requesting a passive-consent process for several reasons. First, due to the nature of the study reflecting routine educational practices related to instructional coaching and paraprofessional classroom aides, we anticipate there is minimal risk for students. Second, the BSC-P intervention will not interfere with routine instruction or the daily work of paraprofessional classroom aides, who by the nature of their profession, already are assigned to students with learning and behavioral difficulties and already utilize strategies similar to the BSC-P intervention. Third, we are not altering, or supplanting any school district assigned procedures, IEP, or 504 plan for students. The BSC-P intervention is complimentary to many special education practices and aims to provide paraprofessional classroom aides with evidence-based skills for meeting implementing these routine district assigned procedures, IEP, and 504 plans. Fourth, the routine practices of paraprofessional classroom aides are beneficial to all students in the classroom and it is anticipated that the BSC-P intervention will promote those benefits.

Lastly, it would not be practical or feasible to obtain parent/guardian consent for all students. To ensure that the current studies procedures do not deviate from routine educational practices and maintain the confidentiality and protection of students receiving special education services, parent/guardian consent is required from all students.

A copy of the passive consent form is provided in this IRB submission, Attachment 4.

- Non-Parental Permission

N/A

- Assent Process

Due to the ages of the children, which will range from approximately 5 years old to 12 years old, we will be providing a passive consent form to parents/guardians only.

**1. Documentation of Assent**

We will be providing a passive consent form to parents/guardians only.

- Non-English Speaking Subjects

There is the potential for Non-English speaking parents/guardians of students. For parents/guardians of student participants, English and Bi-Lingual with Spanish will be the most common pairing.

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may name other students that are not the focus of the behavioral interventions. The research investigators and coaches will remind teachers that the focus of the study will be exclusively on paraprofessionals and students who have consented to participation in the study.

▪ **Observation And Sensitive Information**

Teachers may become nervous when being observed by the independent observers or when the coach is observing the paraprofessional.

Paraprofessional classroom aides may become nervous when being observed by their coach.

It is possible that students may be curious about independent observers and the coach in the classroom.

**E. Minimizing Risks**

During the completion of all assessments, and coaching meetings, both the paraprofessional classroom aides and teachers will be encouraged to only provide information related to the 3 students that are the focus of the behavioral interventions. The instructional coaches on the Rutgers University research staff will keep the focus of coaching meetings to 3 students that are the focus of the behavioral interventions by the paraprofessionals. Audio-tape transcriptions will remove any identifying information such as names from the transcript.

The online logging system used by paraprofessionals for daily logging and instructional coaches for monitoring coaching sessions is protected behind the Rutgers University firewall and utilizes secure socket layer technology (SSL certificates) to authenticate user logins.

All research and data collection procedures will be treated as confidential. Identifying information about paraprofessional classroom aides, teachers, and students will be collected. The identifying information collected will include the name, demographic characteristics, classroom assignment, and school building assignment of all participants. To ensure confidential protection of the collected data, all participants identifying information will be coded and assigned a random number. Access to the confidential data and linkage will be restricted to Rutgers University research staff.

Please see section 6.0 for specific procedures on data confidentiality and security.

**F. Certificate of Confidentiality**

N/A

**G. Potential Benefits to Subjects**

Participating paraprofessional classroom aides may benefit from (a) receiving instructional coaching to enhance their professional competencies in using evidence-based behavioral interventions (b) increased knowledge of evidence-based behavioral interventions, (c) positive improvements in students' academic

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and behavior outcomes, (d) positive improvements in their relationships with students, (e) positive improvements in their relationship with teachers, and (f) increases in self-efficacy.

Participating classroom teachers may benefit from (a) receiving instructional coaching to enhance their professional competencies in using evidence-based behavioral interventions (b) increased knowledge of evidence-based behavioral interventions, (c) positive improvements in students' academic and behavior outcomes, (d) positive improvements in their relationships with students, and (e) positive improvements in their relationship with their paraprofessional support.

Participating students will benefit from their assigned paraprofessional classroom aides receiving instructional coaching on evidence based behavioral interventions.

**H. Provisions to Protect the Privacy Interests of Subjects**

Participants will be informed of their right to refrain from providing responses to individual study items or questions. They will be informed that no negative consequences will result from doing so.

**I. Research Team Access To Subject Data**

Only the PIs, independent observers, and coaches that are a part of the Rutgers University research team will have access to study data. This will include access to subjects identifying information such as names, age, gender, and race/ethnicity as well as school district, school building, and classroom associations. This will also include data from all of the rating scales, assessments, direct observations, online logs, and audio tapes of coaching sessions.

Access to this data is necessary to ensure accurate linkage between all records collected by independent observers, teachers, paraprofessional classroom aides and coaches. The Rutgers University research team will only have access to this data for purposes of collection, entry, quality control, and analysis.

**4.10 Secondary Data – Records/Chart Reviews/Databases/Tissue Banks/etc.**

N/A

**4.11 Chart/Record Review Selection**

N/A

**4.12 Secondary Specimen Collection**

N/A

**5.0 Special Considerations**

**5.1 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

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D. Prior to data entry, all hard copy assessments, rating scales, and direct observations will be checked for data quality. Rutgers University research staff with receive training on each of the assessments, rating scales, and direct observation measures. Data quality rules for each assessment, rating scale, and direct observation measure will be derived from the training and knowledge of how each assessment operates. Example: Checking rating scales for variation in responses.

For all data collected via hard copy assessments, rating scales, and direct observations, one member of the research team will manually enter the data, and subsequently, two other members will double-check to make sure all data was entered correctly. A coding rubric will be developed to maintain consistency in coding of the data. This coding will be overseen by PI Reddy.

For the online logs completed by paraprofessional classroom aides and coaches, the online logging system generates performance reports for the purposes of monitoring data collection.

*Describe how data be handled study-wide:*

- *What information will be included in that data?*

Data collected will encompass behavioral intervention practices utilized by paraprofessionals, students' behavioral and academic outcomes, and potential mediating and moderating variables throughout multiple time points during the study. Data will be collected via online logging, self-report, direct behavioral and classroom observations, coding of permanent products, school records, and achievement tests.

Data will also include identifying information about paraprofessional classroom aides, teachers, and students, and will be treated as confidential. The identifying information collected will include the name, demographic characteristics, classroom assignment, and school building assignment of all participants.

To ensure confidential protection of the collected data, all participants identifying information will be coded and assigned a random number. All data when entered to project databases will be keyed to the assigned random number.

- *Where, how, and for how long will the data will be stored?*

All hard copy forms and audio recordings will be securely stored in a locked file cabinet. PI Reddy will be the only person with the key. PIs Reddy and Glover will distribute and monitor access to hard copy forms and audio recordings as needed during the process of audio transcription and data entry.

All electronically stored data (i.e., online logs, project databases) will be stored on a secure fire-wall encrypted drive for five years. Only the key personnel involved in the study (i.e., those who are listed in the beginning of this document) will have access to the data and drive permissions are monitored/granted by PIs Reddy and Glover. All digital data will be stored on a secure fire-wall encrypted drive for five years.

- *Who will have access to the data?*

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Paraprofessional classroom aides and teachers will have access to coaching progress monitoring data while the BCS-P intervention is occurring. Coaches will provide paraprofessional classroom aides and teachers with visual performance feedback of the coaching data (i.e., graphs, visuals).

Only the key personnel involved in the study (i.e., those who are listed in the beginning of this document) will have access to the hard-copy data stored at Rutgers University and the electronic data stored on secure drives. Drive permissions are monitored/granted by PIs Reddy and Glover.

Only PIs Reddy and Glover and the key personnel involved in the study will have access to the data key the shows the relationship between participants and the randomly assigned number and codes used for data entry.

- *Who is responsible for receipt or transmission of the data?*

PIs Reddy and Glover will provide training to school district leaders, paraprofessional classroom aides, and teachers on the study and data collection procedures prior to the start of the study. School district leaders will be provided with a list of Rutgers University research staff who are authorized to collect data for the purposes of the study. Paraprofessional classroom aides and teachers will be informed that all completed assessments, rating scales, and online logs are to be turned into approved Rutgers University research staff only.

PI Reddy and Glover will be responsible managing generating extant project database once data collection is complete. PI Reddy and Glover are responsible for the receipt and/or transmission of the data.

- *How will the data will be transported/shared?*

All assessments, rating scales, and online logs used in the current study will be turned into or collected by Rutgers University research staff only. They will be physically transported from the public schools back to the Rutgers University project offices, where they will be stored behind locked filing cabinets and doors.

#### 6.2 Data Security

Please see previous descriptions for Data Management in 6.1 above.

All hard copy forms and audio recordings will be securely stored in a locked file cabinet. PI Reddy will be the only person with the key. PIs Reddy and Glover will distribute and monitor access to hard copy forms and audio recordings as needed during the process of audio transcription and data entry.

All electronically stored data (i.e., online logs, project databases) will be stored on a secure fire-wall encrypted drive for five years. Only the key personnel involved in the study (i.e., those who are listed in the beginning of this document) will have access to the data and drive permissions are monitored/granted by PIs Reddy and Glover. PI Reddy and Glover are responsible for the receipt and/or transmission of the data.

#### 6.3 Data and Safety Monitoring

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## **Efficacy of Paraprofessional Behavior Support Coaching**

### **Consent Forms**

- 1. Paraprofessional Informed Consent Form**
- 2. Teacher Informed Consent Form**
- 3. Parent/Guardian Consent Form (passive consent)**

If you are assigned to the Coaching Condition, you will also engage in the following activities throughout the current school year with your coach:

- Meet with an instructional coach from Rutgers University for approximately 8 coaching sessions, each 30 to 45 minutes long. Your instructional coach will work with you on implementing behavioral interventions for your students with or at risk for behavioral disorders.
- Allow for observations from your coach throughout the year to help monitor your implementation and provide feedback to you.
- Meet with an instructional coach several times after the initial 8 coaching sessions to assist with monitoring and maintaining student progress

Participants assigned to the Waitlist Condition will receive the coaching model the following year.

Confidentiality:

This research is confidential. Confidential means that the research records will include some information about you. This information will be stored in such a manner that some linkage between your identity and the response in the research exists. Some of the information collected about you includes your name, school association, classroom/teacher assignment, age, gender, ethnicity, and the students you are assigned to work with.

Please note that we will keep this information confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location. The data gathered in this study are confidential with respect to your personal identity unless you specify otherwise. The research team and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see these data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group de-identified results will be stated (no individual teachers). All study data will be kept for five years (2022).

Potential Risks, Discomfort, And Benefits:

There are no foreseeable risks to participating this study. If you feel distressed in any way during the study please contact Dr. Linda A. Reddy at 848-445-3949 or Dr. Todd Glover at 848-445-5416. If you decide you would like to stop participating in the project, you may do so at any time.

There are no costs associated with participation in this research study. You will not be reimbursed for expenses relating to the study such as parking or childcare.

You have been told that the benefits of taking part in this study may be: (a) receiving instructional coaching to your professional competencies in using evidence-based behavioral interventions (b) increased knowledge of evidence-based behavioral interventions, (c) observing positive improvements in your students' academic and behavioral outcomes, and (d) observing positive improvements in your relationship with students. However, you may receive no direct benefit from taking part in this study.

You will receive \$100.00 for your participation and completion of all assessments used in the study.

**Audio Addendum to Paraprofessional Informed Consent Form**

You have already agreed to participate in a research study titled: Efficacy of Rutgers Paraprofessional Behavior Support Coaching conducted by Drs. Linda Reddy and Todd Glover. We are asking for your permission to allow us to audiotape the 8 coaching sessions as part of the research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the study.

The recording(s) will be used to (a) provide feedback to coaches on their work with you, (b) train new coaches on the research team, and (c) create transcripts of coaching sessions for data analyses.

The recordings will include some information about you and this information will be stored in such a manner that some linkage between your identity and the response in the research exists. Some of the information collected about you includes your name, school association, classroom/teacher assignment, age, gender, ethnicity, and information about your students. If you say anything that you believe at a later point may be hurtful and/or damage your reputation or reveal identifying information, we will erase such information. Later, rerecording will be transcribed and maintained on a secure computer and destroyed upon completion of the study. No names or identifying information will be included in any transcriptions.

Please note that we will keep this information confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location. The data gathered in this study are confidential with respect to your personal identity unless you specify otherwise. The research team and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see these data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group de-identified results will be stated (no individual teachers). All study data will be kept for five years (2022).

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

Subject (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



Teacher participants assigned to the *Coaching Condition* will also engage in the following activities throughout the current school year with your coach:

- Attend 4 coaching sessions with a paraprofessional who supports students in your classroom and an instructional coach from Rutgers University. Each meeting is approximately 30 to 45 minutes long. The instructional coach will collaborate with you on how to support the paraprofessional in implementing behavioral interventions for your students with or at risk for behavioral disorders.
- Allow for several observations from the coach throughout the year to help monitor implementation and provide feedback to the paraprofessional in your classroom.

Confidentiality:

This research is confidential. Confidential means that the research records will include some information about you. This information will be stored in such a manner that some linkage between your identity and the response in the research exists. Some of the information collected about you includes your name, school association, classroom/teacher assignment, age, gender, ethnicity, and the students you are assigned to work with.

Please note that we will keep this information confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location. The data gathered in this study are confidential with respect to your personal identity unless you specify otherwise. The research team and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see these data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group de-identified results will be stated (no individual teachers). All study data will be kept for five years (2022).

Potential Risks, Discomfort, And Benefits:

There are no foreseeable risks to participating this study. If you feel distressed in any way during the study please contact Dr. Linda A. Reddy at 848-445-3949 or Dr. Todd Glover at 848-445-5416. If you decide you would like to stop participating in the project, you may do so at any time.

There are no costs associated with participation in this research study. You will not be reimbursed for expenses relating to the study such as parking or childcare.

You have been told that the benefits of taking part in this study may be: (a) receiving instructional coaching to your professional competencies in using evidence-based behavioral interventions (b) increased knowledge of evidence-based behavioral interventions, (c) observing positive improvements in your students' academic and behavioral outcomes, and (d) observing positive improvements in your relationship with students. However, you may receive no direct benefit from taking part in this study.

You will receive \$100.00 for your participation and completion of all assessments used in the study.

### Audio Addendum to Teacher Informed Consent Form

You have already agreed to participate in a research study titled: ***Efficacy of Rutgers Paraprofessional Behavior Support Coaching*** conducted by Drs. Linda Reddy and Todd Glover. We are asking for your permission to allow us to audiotape the 8 coaching sessions as part of the research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the study.

The recording(s) will be used to (a) provide feedback to coaches on their work with you, (b) train new coaches on the research team, and (c) create transcripts of coaching sessions for qualitative analyses.

The recordings will include some information about you and this information will be stored in such a manner that some linkage between your identity and the response in the research exists. Some of the information collected about you includes your name, school association, classroom/teacher assignment, age, gender, ethnicity, and information about your students. If you say anything that you believe at a later point may be hurtful and/or damage your reputation or reveal identifying information, we will rewind the recording and record over such information. Later, this recording will be transcribed and maintained on a secure computer and destroyed upon completion of the study. No names or identifying information will be included in any transcriptions.

Please note that we will keep this information confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location. The data gathered in this study are confidential with respect to your personal identity unless you specify otherwise. The research team and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see these data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group de-identified results will be stated (no individual teachers). All study data will be kept for five years (2022).

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

Subject (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that we will keep this information confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location. The data gathered in this study are confidential with respect to your child's personal identity unless you specify otherwise. The research team and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see these data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group de-identified results will be stated (no individual teachers). All study data will be kept for five years (2022).

**What are potential risks and discomfort associated with this project?**

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study. If your child reports feeling uncomfortable in any way during the study please contact Dr. Linda A. Reddy at 848-445-3949 or Dr. Todd Glover at 848-445-5416. If you decide you would like your child to stop participating in the research project, you may do so at any time.

**What are potential benefits of this study?**

Benefits of your child taking part in this study may be: (a) the receipt of behavior support strategies from coached paraprofessional classroom aides, (b) improved academic and behavioral outcomes resulting from strategy participation, and (c) improved relationships with paraprofessional classroom aides, teachers, and other students. However, your child may receive no direct benefit from taking part in this study.

**What are costs or compensation for the project?**

There are no costs associated with your child's participation in this research study. You and your child will not be reimbursed for study participation.

**Is participation required?**

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. **If you would like your child to participate in the study, you do not need to do anything.** By allowing your child to participate, you will imply your voluntary parental consent for your child to participate in this research study.

You may choose to not allow your child to participate in the study and you may withdraw your child from participating at any time during the study activities without any penalty to your child. In addition, your child may also choose not to answer any questions that makes them or you uncomfortable.

If you DO NOT want your child to participate in the study, please contact Dr. Linda Reddy or Dr. Todd Glover at the information provided below.

If you have any questions about the study or study procedures, you may contact

Dr. Linda Reddy  
41 Gordon Rd., Suite C  
Piscataway, NJ 08854  
848-445-3849  
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Dr. Todd Glover  
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